

## DAD'S ALMOND ROCA (English Toffee)

This is what everyone wants for Christmas. And all other times of the year.

1 lb salted butter  
2 cups sugar  
2 cups slivered almonds, finely chopped and divided in 2  
6 T water  
2 T light Karo syrup  
1 t vanilla  
2 12-oz chocolate bars, 1 bar/side (chocolate chips do not stick well to the roca)

Run almonds through blender/food processor, fairly fine. 1 cup is for the roca, the other is for dusting on top and should also be very fine.

On low heat, melt butter, sugar, and water in heavy pot covered with lid. After the mixture is liquid, add 1 cup almonds and karo syrup. Turn up heat to medium high and cover until boiling. Start stirring after that more or less constantly, not obsessively. Stir bottom and sides. However, if crystals start to form on sides, rinse stirring spoon/utensil with water before stirring again. When it reaches hard crackling, about 300°F, remove from heat. Add 1 tsp vanilla & stir. Pour onto parchment paper covered cookie sheet & smooth to cover entire sheet. (300°-320° works well in Chicago, 340° in Seattle, 350° for Spokane- altitude and humidity affect this, and in general higher temperatures produce a smokier flavor.)

When roca is cooled, heat one-half the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave and spread over the candy. Spread half of the remaining almonds on top. When cold, turn the candy over and do the other side. Break into small pieces. Eat!

Notes: The dreaded separation caused by sugar crystallizing: using salted butter is one remedy, the Karo syrup another. Keeping the lid on till boiling is a 3rd as the steam should melt sugar crystals on the side of the pot. Shock can also cause separation, such as upping the heat or stirring too vigorously. If roca splits back into butter and sugar during heating, one can add water to the mixture, stir, and try reheating. The water boils off as the temperature passes 212 degrees F. CookingForEngineers has a good writeup on the catastrophes <http://www.cookingforengineers.com/recipe/159/English-Toffee>.

